(v) to acquire acreage abroad, ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL), the wholly owned subsidiary of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has acquired participating interests in the overseas E&P projects in Vietnam, Myamnar & Iraq. In 2001, OVL optioned 20% stake in Sakhalin-I project of Russia with and estimated investment of about US$1.74 billion {Rs. 8.500 crore, approximately).

Assessment of Gas in Tripura

714. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the States which are rich in petroleum and natural gas;

(b) the quantity of gas assessed by ONGC in Tripura;

(c) the projects in which the huge amount of gas in Tripura witi be utilised; and

(d) whether there is any forecasting about the presence of oil in Tripura?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRYOF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) As per current assessment, States and Union Terrirtories considered prospective from hydrocarban point of view are; Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkand, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttranchal, West Bengal and Pondicherry.

(b) As on 1.4.2002, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has established 27,981 Billion Cubic metre (BCM) of ultimate gas reserves in the State of Tripura.

(c) M/s North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO) and M/s Oswal Chemical & Fertilizer, (OCFL) are two major prospective users for the proposed power plant and the fertilizer plant, respectively, to be set up in Tripura.

(d) Exploratory efforts for hydrocarbons in any area, including Tripura, are targeted both for oil and gas. However, Tripura and the adjoining areas of Bangladesh are gas prone, as proven from exploration results so far.

Agreement with Iraq in Oil Exploration

715. SHRI HARENDRA SINGH MALIK: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Iraq has asked India for assistance and know-how for setting up a major oil refinery and also for oil exploration;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the present status of its consideration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (c) During the 15th Session of the Joint Commission for Economic and Technical Cooperation of India and Iraq, held in Baghdad of 6th & 7th July, 2002, India agreed to consider the Iraq's proposal for setting up and investing in **a** new grass root refinery of 1,50,000 barrels per day (about 7.5 million metric tonnes per annum) capacity in Mosul area of Iraq.

As far as oil exploration activities are concerned, ONGC-Videsh Limited, a 100% subsidiary of Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC), has signed an exploration and development contract with Oil Exploration Company of the Ministry of Oil, Iraq on 28.11.2000 for the exploration block-8 in the western desert of Iraq.

Investments in Oil Sector in Kazakhstan

716. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether India propose to make major investments in the oil and gas sector in Kazakhstan;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether major investments are to be made in four identified Caspian Sea oilfields in Kazakhstan; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) to (d) ONGQ-